

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04

H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 /079 W

-----086383 161054Z /20

R 160650Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI

TO SECSTATE 147

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY CAIRONVPWW

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SANA

USUN 026

COMIDEASTFOR

C O N F I D E N T I A L DJIBOUTI 0225

E.O. 11652: GDS

EAGS: PBOR, PDEV, FT, ET

SUBJECT: SITUATION IN THE HARRAR

1. ONE OF THE PROMINENT GUESTS AT RECENT INDEPENDENCE CELEBRATIONS WAS THE OUGAZ OF THE ISSAS, WHO WAS A MEMBER OF THE ETHIOPIAN DELEGATION. RESIDENT IN DIRE DAWA, THE OUGAZFXAIN-TAINS BOTH TEMPORAL AUTHORITY AND SPIRITUAL TIES WITH ALL OF THE ISSAS, INCLUDING THOSE IN SOMALIA AND DJIBOUTI. HE WAS ACCORDED CONSIDERABLE HONORS DURING THE VARIOUS INDEPENDENCE CEREMONIES, AND WAS ICTURED IN THE LOCAL PRESS GIVING HIS BLESSING TO THE DELEGATION LEAVING FOR THE OAU SUMMIT. ACCORDING TO SOME KNOWLEDGE SOURCES, HE HAD A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT HASSAN GOULED EVERY DAY DURINRKHIS VISIT WHICH ENDED JULY 12.

2. DURING THE COURSE OF HIS STAY IN DJIBOUT, THE CHARGE HAD
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THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK PRIVATELY WITH THE OUGAZ ABOUT THE SITUATION IN THE DIRE DAWA AREA. THE MEETING TOOK PLACE ONLY IN THE PRESENCE OF THE OUGAZ'S SON WHO LIVES IN DJIBOUTI AND PRECAUTIONS WERE MADE SO THAT NO OTHER MEMBER OF THE ETHIOPIAN DELEGATION WAS AWARE OF THE MEETING WHICH LASTED ONE HOUR. THE OUGAZ SPEAKS ONLY SOMALI-ISSA AND HIS SON ACTED AS.

INTERPRETER.

3. MILITARY SITUATION IN DIRE DAWA: THE OUGAZ SAID THAT MANY ETHIOPIAN TROOPS HAD RECENTLY COME INTO THE REGION AND HAD LOST MANY MEN TO SOMALI REBELS WHO NOW CONTROL ALL OF HARRAR OUTSIDE OF THE MAIN TOWNS.

4. PROSPECTS FOR THE RAILWAY: THE ETHIOPIANS ARE WORKING VALIANTLY TO REPAIR THE DAMAGES CAUSED BY THE REBELS, BUT WILL NOT BE SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE EVERY TIME SOMETHING IS REPAIRED THE SOMALI FORCES BLOW SOMETHING ELSE. THE OUGAZ DOES NOT BELIEVE THAT THE SOMALIS WILL EVER PERMIT THE RAILWAY TO OPEN UP AGAIN.

5. HIS RELATIONS WITH THE SOMALI LIBERATION GROUPS: THE OUGAZ SAID THAT HE IS A SOMALI, BUT HE DOES NOT WANT DOMINATION FROM EITHER MOGADISCIO OR ADDIS ABABA. HE REPORTED THAT IF HE WERE CAPTURED BY THE REBELS, THEY WOULD KIDNAP HIM AND TAKE HIM TO MOGADISCIO.

6. HIS RELATIONS WITH THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT: THE OUGAZ SAID THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN HIS PEOPLE AND THE ETHIOPIAN MILITARY ARE VERY TENSE. THERE HAVE BEEN MANY INCIDENTS AS THE MILITARY HAVE ATTEMPTED TO DRAFT HIS MEN INTO WORK GANGS TO WORK ON THE RAILWAY, WITH DEATHS ON BOTH SIDES. HOWEVER, THE OUGAZ SAID THAT THEY HAVE "ONLY ONE RIFLE," SO HOW COULD THEY

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RESIST.

7. LIVING CONDITIONS FOR HIS PEOPLE: THE ISSAS IN THE HARRAR ARE MOST SEDENTARY AGRICULTURIST, UNLIKE THE NOMADIC ISSAS OF SOMALIA AND DJIBOUTI. THEREFORE, THE CLOSING OF THE RAILWAY CAUSES THEM ONLY THE LOSS OF RAILWAY JOBS. THERE IS STILL FOOD TO EAT.

8. CLOSING REMARKS: THE OUGAZ HOPED FOR PEACE TO RETURN TO ETHIOPIA. HE BELIEVES STRONGLY THAT DJIBOUTI MUST RETAIN ITS INDEPENDENCE SO THAT ISSA PEOPLE WILL HAVE A REFUGE FROM THE TROUBLES IN ETHIOPIA AND SOMALIA. HE RECALLS WITH AFFECTION THE EFFORTS DONE BY THE UMS. PEOPLE TO IMPROVE THE LOT OF THE ISSA PEOPLE IN ETHIOPIA AND HOPES THAT U.S. WILL ASSIST DJIBOUTI.

CLARK

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